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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
December 11, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

### IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which President Obama signed into law 4 years ago yesterday.

When I came to Congress, updating the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was one of my top priorities, and I was proud to stand with President Obama on the day that we finally left behind No Child Left Behind.

More than 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into law, and he said ESEA represents a major new commitment of the Federal Government to quality and equality in the schooling that we offer our young people.

I agree with President Johnson. When we promote and realize equity in education, when we expand and invest in educational opportunities, we can improve outcomes for all students at all levels.

Reauthorizing ESEA in 2015 was meant to put us closer to achieving that equality envisioned in the original law, but there is still much work to be done.

ESSA created new opportunities to make sure that all students, regardless of their race, color, national origin, ZIP Code, or family wealth, could have an equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality public education.

It returned flexibility and autonomy to States and districts to set high standards for all students, to evaluate schools using multiple measures of student learning, and to design systems for identifying schools in need of additional support.

With provisions I championed, States were also given the ability to eliminate unnecessary or duplicative testing and access to resources for fewer, better quality assessments. Importantly, the Every Student Succeeds Act put more emphasis on well-rounded education that prepares students to be creative, critical thinkers.

Since ESSA's passage, I have worked hard with appropriators to make sure Congress fulfills the commitments made in this law with robust funding of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.

As we continue to implement this law, strong Federal accountability and support are necessary to make sure that the flexibility and autonomy that

States and districts now have is used to identify and close achievement gaps, rather than to shirk responsibility to students. We know there is more work to be done in that area, as well.

Unfortunately, the current Department of Education is more focused on privatizing education than on making sure that the States fully implement the law. They are not holding States accountable for improving outcomes of disadvantaged students. This is most noticeable in the Department's approval of State plans that ignore the performance of subgroups altogether and the lack of guidance and regulation available to help States implement the Every Student Succeeds Act.

As we reflect on passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act and the opportunities it provides, I urge the Department of Education and Secretary DeVos to support States and hold them accountable for implementing this law with fidelity. My colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee will continue our robust oversight of the Department's implementation to make sure that the Every Student Succeeds Act fulfills a promise we made to all students when President Obama signed it into law.

### RECOGNIZING MISSISSIPPI FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize five 2019 Mississippi football State championship teams that hail from my district.

In 1A, the Nanih Waiya Warriors defeated the Lumberton Panthers 28-to-14.

In 4A, the Corinth Warriors defeated the Poplarville Hornets 55-to-21.

In 5A, the West Point Green Wave defeated the Neshoba Central Rockets 20-to-7.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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In 6A, the Oxford Chargers defeated the Oak Grove Warriors 31-to-21.

Finally, in MAIS 5A, the Heritage Academy Patriots defeated the Starkville Academy Volunteers 55-to-10.

There is nothing that brings Mississippi together more than Friday night lights, and to have this many championship teams in the First District is quite an honor.

I am proud of the young men who gave their all in the heat of August two-a-days, the regular season and the playoffs, and, finally, at The Rock in Hattiesburg to win a State championship.

I recognize the hard work and dedication of the bands, cheerleaders, dance teams, and all the other participants who make football games such an exciting Friday night community event in Mississippi.

I thank the parents who drove their children to and from practice and spent every Friday night in the fall driving across the State of Mississippi to watch their kids compete on the field.

Finally, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the teachers, school administrators, and coaches who work every day to make sure that our kids have a bright future on the field and in the classroom.

#### SUPPORT LOWER DRUG COSTS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act.

I thank the Speaker and my colleagues for working so hard to bring this important piece of legislation to the floor. I believe there are few issues more significant and few issues more impactful to the lives of everyday Americans than the ever-increasing costs of healthcare and the lack of access to vital treatment.

As a two-time breast cancer survivor, I know all too well the stress and the heartache of a life-changing diagnosis. Treatment was exhausting, both physically and emotionally, but I was truly blessed to be able to afford my medication.

Even today, I continue to pay excessive out-of-pocket costs for my medication. However, I am lucky to be in a position where I do not have to make serious sacrifices to pay for the care that I need.

Unfortunately, this is not reality for all Americans. We live in the richest Nation in the history of nations. This is the greatest country on Earth. I refuse to believe that we cannot find a solution that allows every American to afford the medications that they need.

I have been shocked by the stories from my constituents about how pharmaceutical companies continue to gouge their pocketbooks and affect their quality of life.

I heard a story recently of a mother in my district who wrote in about her son, who is 27 and has type 1 diabetes. He pays \$400 a month for his insulin while also trying to repay his college loans from pursuing his master's degree. She wrote in to speak for her son because she is scared. Her son experiences the same hardship that so many Americans do because of a diagnosis they did not choose.

Too often, stories like this end with a patient resorting to rationing of essential treatments, often with catastrophic results.

These are lifesaving medications. They are not optional, and people should never have to make the unthinkable decision about whether to purchase their medications or put food on their tables or gas in their cars.

On average, Americans pay three to four times as much for the same prescription drugs as people in other countries. Over the last two decades alone, the price of insulin has increased by 1,000 percent. There is no reasonable explanation for these costs, and the American people have had enough.

The constantly rising prices have far-reaching consequences, increasing the price of health insurance premiums and eating into workers' wages.

Let us be clear, it is taxpayer dollars and wages that go toward paying for these outrageous prescription drug prices, and it is time for Congress to say that enough is enough.

This is the most comprehensive solution to our country's drug pricing problem ever to be seriously considered by the House of Representatives. This legislation would give Medicare the power to negotiate directly with the drug companies and create a powerful mechanism that forces drug companies to the table to compromise on real price reductions.

It also stops pharmaceutical companies from overcharging Americans while charging other countries less for the same drugs, and it creates a \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

Finally, it will reverse years of unfair price hikes above inflation across thousands of drugs in Medicare, making lower drug prices negotiated by Medicare available to Americans with private insurance, not just Medicare beneficiaries.

The Lower Drug Costs Now Act is a good deal for the American people. It saves the taxpayers over \$450 billion during the next decade and allows us to make long-sought-after investments into Medicare and the National Institutes of Health.

In fact, this bill includes legislation that I wrote to include coverage of hearing aids in Medicare, making them affordable for our seniors. It will also deliver vision and dental benefits while investing huge sums into the search for new cures.

All the mothers and fathers who lay awake at night worried about enrolling their kids in after-school activities or

making their mortgage or car payments will benefit from this bill. We are fighting for them, and it is a fight that we intend to win.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF STEPHEN CARR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WOMACK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life, service, and sacrifice of a hero from the Third District of the great State of Arkansas, Fayetteville Police Officer Stephen Carr.

On Saturday, December 7, Officer Carr was preparing to begin another shift of keeping his community safe when he was cowardly ambushed and executed, most likely because of the uniform he wore.

We have lost one of our finest law enforcement officers, someone who dedicated his life to serving Arkansas and defending others. Officer Carr made it his mission to make our State a safer place for everyone.

Officer Carr served as a protector, promoted peace and justice, and demonstrated the valor and integrity that the uniform embodies.

Our hearts are broken as we grieve this unthinkable loss. Today, we vow never to forget his memory and pledge to honor his life of service forever. I join all of Arkansas this morning in the mourning of the loss of Officer Stephen Carr. Our prayers are with his family, his loved ones, and the Fayetteville Police Department.

I also recognize Corporal Seay Floyd and Officer Natalie Eucce, who immediately engaged and eliminated the suspect.

Our police deserve our deepest respect and gratitude. While they know the risks they face are greater than ever, they refuse to shy away from their mission to protect and serve.

Stephen Carr was a native of The Woodlands, Texas. Mr. Speaker, my friend and colleague Representative KEVIN BRADY would have been on this floor this morning to offer his condolences to the family, a family that he knew personally, but because of a markup in the Ways and Means Committee, he is unable to be on the floor with me this morning.

Mr. Speaker, if it please the House, I would like to ask for a moment of silence for Officer Carr, who will be laid to rest tomorrow, and, in fact, for all of our heroes who have faced the end of watch.

□ 1015

#### CELEBRATING HOUSTON METHODIST HOSPITAL'S CENTENNIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise with love of country at heart and my mnemonic notes in hand.